

WHEN THE KING COMES BACK

by

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CHAPTER NINE

When the Apostles Saw the Kingdom

THE NEW TESTAMENT, like the Old, speaks of the kingdom of GOD on earth. It too, predicts a literal Millennium, a Golden Age, with JESUS CHRIST reigning as King.

There is a spiritual kingdom and there is a physical kingdom, but the two are never confused. David's throne is yet to be established. "**Thy kingdom come**" is still the prayer of the Church.

Now for a vision of the glorified King. What will He be like? For that vision we turn to Matthew 17:1-13. In the last verse of the previous chapter we are told that He is coming, but that when He comes this time it will be in His kingdom; not to redeem but to rule; not in humiliation but in glory; not in the weakness of a babe but in the power of a King.

The Transfiguration actually took place, but it did not last. It was not intended to last; the time was not yet. It was but a glimpse of what His reign will be.

Only Peter, James and John saw it. But they never forgot; they never could. Peter refers to it in his Epistle.

A Vision of the Kingdom

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (II Peter 1:16-18).

He speaks of the "**power**" of His coming and refers to CHRIST as "**his majesty**." He received, he says, "**honour and glory**," while the scene itself he describes as "**the excellent glory**."

Matthew says "**his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.**" Think of it- "**as the sun.**" How bright is the sun? Who can look at it? Yet the face of JESUS is still brighter. What a transfiguration! That is the way He will appear during the Millennium.

His companions are heavenly beings, Moses and Elijah, and the voice is the voice of GOD. "**This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.**" Elijah, He says, will precede His return. John the Baptist could have been Elijah, had he been accepted, but he was not, and so Elijah himself is yet to come (Matthew 17:10-13).

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:5, 6).

What About the Apostles?

In Matthew 19:28, the kingdom is called "**the regeneration.**"

The word is only used in one other place in the entire Bible (Titus 3:5), and there it has a purely spiritual significance. The Greek word is *paliggenesia* and it means *to make over new, to recreate*. Here the reference is to the coming kingdom when JESUS CHRIST will transform the entire social order.

Peter had asked the question, "**Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?**" In other words, "We have left our homes, our work, our friends, our all, and have followed Thee. That is the price we have paid. That is what it has cost us to become Thy disciples. Well, now, what are we going to get out of it? What is to be our reward?"

It reminds us of the rich young ruler in Mark 10:17-30, when JESUS said, "**Sell whatsoever thou hast . . . and come, take up the cross, and follow me.**" Now then, if a man does that, what will he get in return? That was Peter's question.

JESUS answered: "**Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**"

JESUS is speaking of the Millennium, the Golden Age, the thousand years reign, when He will be sitting on the throne of His father David. In other words, the Kingdom Age, when at last the long promised kingdom has come. During that period, He says, the twelve tribes of Israel will be governed by the twelve apostles. Each will be seated on a throne. It is to be a theocratic government as predicted in Isaiah 1:26. That is to be their reward (Luke 22:28-30).

But they were not satisfied, at least the two sons of Zebedee, James and John. Their mother wanted them to have the two chief seats of honor on His throne, the left, and the right. Having heard the kingdom was to become a reality and that the twelve apostles were to be chief rulers, she asked that her sons be given the places of honor nearest Him in His kingdom (Matthew 20:20-28).

What was His answer? Did He tell them that they were wrong, that there would not be a kingdom? Never! He said such positions would be allotted in His kingdom, but that they would be given by His Father to those specially chosen.

When Will the Kingdom Come?

In Matthew 24 we have the order and means of the establishment of the kingdom of GOD on earth. The disciples wanted to know the sign of the end of the age. CHRIST first enumerates a number of signs, but adds "**the end is not yet All these are the beginning of sorrows.**" Then in verse 14, He mentions the sign that indicates the end, world evangelization, and adds, "**then shall the end come.**"

Following that there is the Great Tribulation, and "**immediately after**" (vs. 29), His return to earth.

It is not secret; it is spectacular. He compares it to the lightning. "**For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.**"

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Now follows the gathering of the elect. "**And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other**" (vs. 31).

And what of the faithful servant? "**He shall make him ruler**" (vs. 47). "**I will make thee ruler**" (25:14-30).

That He is to come in glory and that He is to be enthroned is clear from Matthew 25:31 - "**When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, .then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.**"

Who is that Son of man? The King (vss. 34 and 40). So when He comes He first of all judges the living nations, and thus prepares the world for His millennial reign. Thus He puts down all rebellion and eliminates evil from His kingdom. Pilate it was who said of Him. "**This is Jesus the King of the Jews**" (Matthew 27:37). Now at last He is King indeed.

Mark, in speaking of His coming, quotes Him as saying, "**Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven**" (Mark 14:62). Thus will He come when He comes to reign.

In Luke 22:16-18, JESUS declares that He will drink no more **"of the fruit of the wine, until the kingdom of God shall come."** So then He Himself most certainly believed in the kingdom. He knew it would come. But as He stated in Luke 17:24-26, there must be first the suffering and then the glory. **"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"** (Luke 24:26).

What About Israel?

Now, Acts 2:30:

"God . . . would raise up Christ to sit on his throne."

What throne? The throne of David. Who is to sit on it? CHRIST.

Is David's throne in Heaven or on earth? It is on earth. Where then will JESUS reign? On earth. And to this agree all the words of the prophets.

Is GOD through with His people Israel? Has He cast them off forever? By no means.

Hearken now to the Apostle Paul as he speaks in Romans 11:1, **"I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew."** Yea, **"all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins"** (Romans 11:26, 27).

This prediction has yet to be fulfilled.

Nationally Israel is to be restored and forgiven. The Deliverer, or Redeemer (Isaiah 59:20, 21), will be JESUS CHRIST. He will regather, restore and convert His earthly people. Then they will be exalted. Their glory is still future. Nor will it be until their Messiah returns to Zion and becomes their Deliverer. That is GOD's plan for them and He will bring it to pass.

Now for Paul's great statement - I Corinthians 15:24-27.

For one thousand years JESUS has reigned. **"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."**

What a tremendous announcement! Here the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father. All rulers, all worldly authority, all earthly powers, have at last been annihilated. There is no rebellion anywhere. All opposition has collapsed. It will be an unconditional surrender, the like of which mankind has never known before. But it will then be willing submission. And when that time comes, JESUS CHRIST will hand the reigns of government to GOD the Father, that GOD, the triune GOD, may be all in all.

But what enemies are conquered?

- First of all, "**death.**"
- Then, "**all things.**"

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet."

No one yet has ever conquered death. It is the enemy of the entire human race. No one can escape it. Oh, the sorrow it brings! How men hate it! Yes, and how they fear it! But at long last it will be destroyed. "**There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain**" (Revelation 21:4).

Then too, "**all things**" - thrones, principalities and powers, angels and archangels, all the armies of evil, the whole universe - will then be conquered and brought into subjection to JESUS CHRIST. When that day comes, GOD alone will be supreme.

What About the Church?

But what part will the Church have? Where do we come in?

Look now at II Timothy 2:12. It says: "**If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.**" Oh, what a glorious prospect!

"If we suffer."

- If we bear His reproach.
- If we endure persecution.
- If we are out and out for JESUS CHRIST.
- If we take our place with Him in this His day of rejection and humiliation.
- If we bear the cross.
- If we turn from the world that crucified Him and go without the camp.
- If we take sides with Him now.
- If we are faithful and loyal.
- If we follow Him here.

If we do, we will reign with Him then.

I am not satisfied to be saved.

- I want to return with CHRIST and share in His reign.
- I long to see this old world when He takes over the reins of government.
- I want to be approved so that He can give me a position of authority in His kingdom.

Those in His Church who have suffered will reign with Him for a thousand years. Will you be approved? Will you reign? Is He going to use you to help Him govern the world during the Millennium?

"If we suffer, we shall also reign." If we do not suffer, the inference is that we will not reign. What a solemn responsibility!

But will we be with Him? Listen to Jude 14:

"Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints."

So, He is coming back and He is bringing His saints with Him. You and I will be there. First the Rapture, then the Revelation. First we are caught up to Him; then we return with Him. For we are coming back as He is coming back. **"We shall reign on the earth"** (Revelation 5:10).

How Will He Come?

See Revelation 1:7:

"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which Pierced him;"

How will He come? With clouds. Who will see Him? All, but especially His own ancient people, those who cried, **"Away with him. Crucify him."**

What will He look like when He comes to reign? See Revelation 1:13-16:

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

What majesty and glory! How different from when He came the first time!

Now comes the announcement of His universal dominion, the glorious fulfillment of Daniel's visions.

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

The hour has at last come to sing the Hallelujah Chorus.

JESUS CHRIST is King. His kingdom dominates and overshadows all others. He is now the supreme Ruler. At last there is but one government, one King, and one kingdom, for He rules over all. He shall reign. Hallelujah!

Note now what the four and twenty elders say: **"Thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And . . . thy wrath is come, and the time . . . that . . . thou . . . shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth"** (Revelation 11:17, 18).

What a prediction! He reigns. He manifests His wrath. He destroys the rulers and nations that have brought desolation and destruction upon the earth.

JESUS CHRIST is now the supreme Ruler. No one can withstand Him. The nations with all their armament are powerless before Him. Rulers and potentates are destroyed. All opposition is put down. Rebels no longer rebel. His enemies at last lick the dust and all the world has been brought into subjection to Him.

King of Kings and Lord of Lords

This, then, is the **"stone cut out without hands"** (Daniel 2:34, 35). Daniel saw Him. Now John sees Him, and oh, what a description! Let us study it. Revelation 19:11-16:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns, and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Yes, JESUS CHRIST is now King of kings and Lord of lords. And He rules the nations **"with a rod of iron."** No one rebels. No one makes war against Him. At long last He triumphs over all His foes. For, during His glorious reign, Satan, His arch enemy, is imprisoned for the whole of the thousand year period (Revelation 20:1-3).

Then reign the martyrs.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20:4).

Yes, they have their thrones. They reign with CHRIST. Who wouldn't be a martyr! What a glorious reward!

"Behold, I come quickly," He exclaims, **"and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be"** (Revelation 22:12).

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

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